

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

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TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: SPAIN AND THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR
EUROPEAN MIGRATION (ICEM)

1. ICEM DIRECTOR JOHN THOMAS HAS INFORMED THE DEPARTMENT THAT THE GOS HAS EVERY INTENTION OF GIVING NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM ICEM BY SEPTEMBER ONE, THE LAST DAY ON WHICH NOTICE CAN BE GIVEN SO AS TO BE EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1977. THE REASONS GIVEN FOR THE WITHDRAWAL AS REPORTED BY THOMAS ARE VAGUE AND APPEAR TO BE GENERALLY CONNECTED WITH PERSONNEL MATTERS. THERE ARE NOT TO OUR KNOWLEDGE ANY SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM POLICY DIFFERENCES. IN ANY EVENT THE USG WOULD REGRET VERY MUCH THE SPANISH DEFECTION ESPECIALLY SINCE SPAIN PROVIDES A DEGREE OF LEADERSHIP WITH THE LATIN AMERICAN BLOC IN ICEM'S GOVERNING BODIES.

2. OVER THE YEARS ICEM HAS PERFORMED A VALUABLE SERVICE FOR SPAIN, MOVING THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES FROM THAT COUNTRY TO AREAS OF PERMANENT SETTLEMENT. IN 1975, SOME 3,675

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PERSONS WERE MOVED AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT ALMOST AN EQUAL

NUMBER WILL BE RESETTLED IN 1976. WE NOTE THAT IN THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF 1976 MORE THAN 600 NEW CUBAN REFUGEES ARRIVED IN SPAIN IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE. AT THE SAME TIME ICEM CONTINUES TO ASSIST SPANISH CITIZENS TO RELOCATE IN LATIN AMERICA UNDER ICEM'S SELECTIVE MIGRATION PROGRAM.

3. WHILE THE FACTS WOULD APPEAR TO US TO MORE THAN JUSTIFY SPAIN'S CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP THERE ARE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF AN EQUALLY COMPELLING NATURE. ICEM HAS A STRONG EUROPEAN ORIENTATION BUT IS ALSO CAPABLE OF UNDERTAKING A VARIETY OF EMERGENCY PROGRAMS FOR MEMBER GOVERNMENTS SUCH AS RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE TO ANGOLAN RETURNEES IN PORTUGAL OR REFUGEES FROM CHILE AND INDOCHINA. WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS, MOST OF THE ICEM MEMBERS ALSO BELONG TO NATO AND THE IMPORTANT NEUTRALS, AUSTRIA AND SWITZERLAND, ARE EQUALLY PROMINENT AND ACTIVE. ICEM HAS AN IMPORTANT HUMANITARIAN MISSION AND SPAIN'S ASSOCIATION WITH IT CAN ONLY ENHANCE ITS IMAGE AS A SUPPORTER OF SUCH CAUSES.

4. WITH THE FOREGOING AS BACKGROUND, EMBASSY MADRID AT THE HIGHEST APPROPRIATE LEVEL IS REQUESTED TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER OR NOT GOS IS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING WITHDRAWING FROM ICEM, AND, IF SO, FOR WHAT REASONS. IF A DECISION HAS BEEN MADE TO WITHDRAW, EMBASSY SHOULD EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES CAN BE RESOLVED AND AN ACCOMMODATION REACHED WITH ICEM IN THE INTEREST OF AVOIDING SUCH A DRASTIC STEP. THE WITHDRAWAL OF ANY MEMBER WEAKENS THE ORGANIZATION AND SPAIN'S LEADERSHIP ROLE AMONG THE LATIN AMERICAN STATES IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN IN THE PAST. SOME LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES HAVE BECOME A NEW SOURCE OF REFUGEES. THE U.S. ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE CONTINUATION OF ICEM'S ACTIVITIES AND EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THEM IN THE HOPE THAT OTHER FAITHFUL MEMBERS SUCH AS SPAIN WILL ALSO DO SO. EMBASSY SHOULD REPORT GOS VIEWS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

5. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO APPROACH SPANISH EMBASSY HERE ON THIS MATTER, DEPENDING ON OUTCOME DISCUSSION IN MADRID.
ROBINSON

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